

“Fear and Appearance are Bad Counselors”

Numbers 20:1-13

Tuesday Bible Lunch

April 23, 2024

Introduction: What do you think people fear most? On the list would certainly be the unknown. From time to time, we all fear things. What we need to remember is that fear does not come from God and is a bad counselor.

- The Bible says, “God has not given us the spirit of fear...(2 Timothy 1:7, NLT).
- Fear can be paralyzing.
- Fear is a bad counselor.

Another bad counselor is appearance. How things appear now is a bad counselor.

I think fear and how things appeared is what led Moses to make the biggest mistake of his life.

Text: Numbers 20:1-13

- The events in Numbers 20:1 to the end of Numbers occurred in the 40th year after the Exodus.
- The journey from Egypt was drawing to a close.
- Numbers chapter 20 begins with the death of Miriam (20:1) and ends with the death of Aaron (20:28).
- But the main thing in the chapter is the mistake Moses made.
- He struck the rock twice (20:11) to get water instead of speaking to the rock as God had told him to do (20:8).

Text: Numbers 20:1-5

1. Fear and appearance became the Israelites counselor.

- During Israel's 40 years in the wilderness, water was their greatest physical need. God had provided water beginning at Horeb (Exodus 17:1-7).
- It appeared to them they would die because of the lack of water.
- The fear of this obviously made them forget how God had provided for them in the past.
- For the Hebrew people, fear was a bad counselor.

2. Fear and appearance became Moses' counselor.

- Fear led Moses and Aaron to pray (20:6).
- God told them clearly what to do (20:7-8).
- Instead of listening to God, they listened to appearance and fear (20:9-10).
- Moses struck the rock twice (20:11) rather than speak to the rock as God had told him to do.

Questions:

1. Did God mentioning taking the staff confuse Moses? It had worked before (Exodus 17:1-7).
2. Did Moses and Aaron think they were the source of water—"must we" (20:10)?

3. Moses may have thought that he would look foolish talking to a rock.
4. Did Moses just not trust God completely?

I think fear and appearance became Moses' counselor rather than God. Moses listened to God forty years earlier at the Red Sea rather than fear and appearance. Forty years later Moses let fear and appearance be his counselor. It seems the Red Sea crisis would have appeared more fearful than the water crisis.

The big question to me is what happened to Moses in Numbers chapter twenty? I think the answer is either he thought he could do it without God or that he was physically exhausted from the forty-year journey.

Life Applications:

1. We are not our best when we are physically not our best.
 2. We are very limited in what we can do without God. Jesus told the disciples walking from the Upper Room to the Garden of Gethsemane that without Him they could do nothing (John 15:5).
 3. The consequences of our sins are certain.
- Moses disobeyed God and it did not seem to really matter. The water still came out of the rock. Moses must have thought it does not really matter if I speak to the rock or strike the rock water. Water comes out either way. But as you read on in the story, you see there were consequences to Moses' sin.
1. Because of his sin, he was not able to enter the Promised Land.
 2. Aaron died (Numbers 20:28).

Now from this we learn a tremendous lesson. The consequences of our sins are not always immediate, but they are always certain. Sometimes they come now. Sometimes they come later, but they will come!

3. "Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7).